The Boy

AND

THE BASKET OF CHERRIES.

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The Boy and the Basket of Cherries.

IT was on a mild summer's afternoon that Mrs. Gaston sent her son Willie, a boy of about

eight years of age, to carry to his grandmother a small basket heaping full of beautiful ox-heart cherries, telling him to return home early, and not to linger on the way.

The child started joyfully upon

the errand, for he loved, like many other little boys, to go and see his grandmother. After walking on some distance, he at last raised the cover of the basket that hung upon his arm, and, lifting the snow-white napkin, gazed longingly at the fruit. There they lay, those large white and red cherries, the earliest of the season, and oh, how tempting they looked! He now hesitated, looked quickly around him, for he felt that he was about to commit a sin; but there was no one near,

and "a few will never be missed," he thought to himself; and placing his hand within the basket, he drew out some of the fruit, and commenced eating it.

When Willie had nearly reached his grandmother's house, the basket was still well filled, but not, I am sorry to say, *as full* as when he left home, and the cherries had not tasted very good to him. But how could it be otherwise when they were stolen, for had he not taken what was meant for another, and that other his kind aged grandmother?

It was with downcast eyes and flushed cheeks that Willie delivered his mother's present. But why should the child hang his head, and the color rise to his face, for his grandmother did not know what he had done? Ah, my little readers, Willie's conscience was not easy; he felt that he had done wrong, and although his grandmother had not seen him, he knew that there was an *all-seeing eye* which was watching him from above, and which plainly saw all he did.

His grandmother was very much pleased with the gift, and sent many thanks to her daughter, telling Willie, also, that he was a very good boy to take the trouble to bring them to her; and after giving him a large piece of fresh gingerbread, she sent him immediately back, for the sun was fast sinking in the west, and it would be nearly dark when he reached home.

Willie walked slowly and thoughtfully on his way; he did not feel happy; in his hand he held the

cake his grandmother had given him; he could not taste a single mouthful of it. Just in front of his father's house there was a small grove, and the child had to pass through it to reach home. The evening was now fast approaching, and when he entered within the shade of the trees, it became quite dark; but he could see the bright light in the sitting-room, and he could hear his mother's voice from the piazza, as she stood watching for his return. He had nearly

reached the house, when he started, hesitated, and looked fearfully upward. Close above his head, from the midst of the green foliage of a magnificent oak, there proceeded the low, mournful note of the whip-poor-will. The child had heard it, and although not for the first time, it smote upon his guilty conscience; he almost felt as if the little bird must know how wicked he had been. He now rushed hastily onward, sprang up the steps, threw his arms around his mother's neck,

and, bursting into tears, acknowledged his fault, exclaiming, "*Whip poor Will.*"

As his mother heard these last words echoed in sad sounds from the tree, she immediately perceived what had caused her son so suddenly to feel that he deserved punishment. Placing her arm affectionately around his neck, she listened to his account of his guilt, told him kindly how wrong he had done, and showed him how little pleasure can ever be procured by doing wrong.

"How could you ever be happy, Willie," she said, "when even the note of that poor little bird caused you to tremble? Do you not remember the words, 'There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked'? Will you not, my son, confess your sin to God, and ask him for Christ's sake to forgive you, and let your earnest prayer always be, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil'?"

And Willie profited by this instruction; but he was not satis-

fied until he saw his grandmother and told her how wrong he had acted, and that he hoped God would keep him from ever being guilty of so great a fault again.

Milly's Doves.

THE way that Milly came to have the doves was this. She

lived in the country, where there were pleasant trees, and lakes full of white water-lilies, and fields full of daisies. The place where Milly's father lived was nicer and pleasanter than I can take time to tell you; and it was called Rose Lawn, because, in the summer-time, the air was scented with the fragrance of red and white roses that bloomed everywhere.

Milly had one little sister younger than herself, named Julia, — called so after an aunt of the two little

girls, who lived in the city, and who came to visit them every summer. This aunt always brought something pretty to Julia, as she was her namesake; but she very seldom thought of bringing anything to Milly, because, as she said, Milly was such a quiet little thing, always poked away in a corner, that she forgot about her, unless she was right under her eyes. But, some time or another, Milly should have something wonderfully nice.

But Milly thought to herself that

"some time or another" was a long way off. Not that her Aunt Julia was an unkind person purposely, but that she always said and did what pleased her best, and people seldom took offence, simply, I suppose, because it wasn't worth while; for if they did, she laughed and said, "Oh, that's my way, you see." I think "that's my way," however, is just the meanest excuse anybody can make for being unkind; and I suppose that all of us only do make it when we mean to

be selfish and please our own dear selves.

This summer, when Aunt Julia opened her trunks, she took out a large box, and calling to Milly's little sister, said, "Come here, little blue-eyes!"

"Aunt Julia is calling you," said Milly to her little sister, "so take my hand, then we can run up-stairs fast. I think she's got something beautiful for you this time."

"Maybe there's something for you, too, Milly," said the little one.

But Milly shook her head; patient waiting had made her wise.

When Julia opened the long box in her aunt's lap, her eyes dilated very wide with surprise and delight, for it held a wax doll that had come from Paris. Her hair was curled, and she had wax hands and feet, and bright black eyes that opened and shut. She had on a fine dress of silk and lace, and had six other dresses beside, and bonnets, and even a small parasol to keep her complexion from the

sun when she went out to walk. Altogether, she was such a very fine lady of a doll that little Julia was almost afraid to take her in her arms, for she had always been contented with "rag babies" until now.

"There, now!" said Aunt Julia, looking at Milly with a face of dismay, "I forgot to bring you anything. If you only wouldn't keep yourself poked away in a corner, child. But, never mind; I'll remember the next time."

Milly was used to this, so, looking at Julia's doll, she said, "Isn't she a beauty? What are you going to call her?"

"I don't know. What would you call her, Milly?"

Milly drew a long breath, then said, "I should call her Queen Rose."

"Queen Rose, of Rose Lawn, eh?" said Aunt Julia. "I fancy you wont be in a corner all your lifetime, Milly, after all. But run along, now, I'm going to unpack."

So the two children came to their mamma to show what Aunt Julia had brought her namesake.

"Mamma," said Milly, "Julia's doll is called Queen Rose, of Rose Lawn; and Aunt Julia says I wont be in a corner all my lifetime, because I named her Queen Rose. Isn't she funny, mamma? I don't stay in a corner at all, only Aunt Julia thinks so."

"Never mind, dear; that's your aunt's way."

So the two children went away

to play; but Milly ran back a minute to say, "Mamma, I'm to have something the next time."

Mamma laughed, then shook her head at Milly, for this was a little joke between them, for they knew that "next time" would be a long while on its journey.

But Milly's mamma saw in all this that her little daughter was neither sinful nor envious, but was pleased that her little sister was remembered, though she was forgotten, and that no shade of ill-

nature had disturbed the sweetness of the child's manner.

When Milly's father heard how bravely Milly had behaved, and how, in her unconscious child's fashion, she had shown herself contented with "such things" as she had, he made up his mind that his little daughter should have something that should be as dear to her as "Queen Rose, of Rose Lawn" was to her sister Julia.

So one afternoon he called to her

from the garden, "Milly, little daughter, come here!"

Milly ran fast, as she always did when she heard her father's voice, and found him standing beside a long box, made with little wooden bars, and out of the box came a soft sound of cooing and rustling.

"Oh, my!" said Milly, and peeping between the bars, she counted one, two, three, four, five pretty doves.

"They are for you, my little daughter. Shall you like them?"

"For *me!*" said Milly, and then because she was so happy — she could do nothing else — she climbed up into her father's arms and kissed him so lovingly that he declared she was a little dove herself, and that he would have to put her in the box with them.

Milly made up her mind that she would keep her doves in the barn, because then she could watch them better. So, after shutting them up a few days until they became accustomed to their new

home, she opened the barn door and let them fly in and out, just as they pleased.

Milly named her doves, one after the other, as soon as she found what name would suit each one best; but the prettiest, because it was pure white, she called Pearl. I think you would all like to have had Pearl for a pet, she was so gentle and tame, and looked so cunning, feeding out of Milly's hand, with her little red feet clasping the rim of the saucer.

Julia, however, cared but little for the doves, which she said were pretty enough, "but not half as charming as her beautiful Queen Rose."

CHAPTER II.

BUT Milly had a little playmate whose name was Bertie, and he liked the doves almost as well as Milly, and used to come to see them every day, and because he

was kind and gentle always, Milly liked him very much.

But one day Bertie did not come, but instead he sent a sheet of paper, folded up in the shape of a boat, and when Milly looked closely, she saw there were words written upon it; so she smoothed out the sheet of paper, and found printed upon it in large capitals, — for Bertie had not yet learned to write, — "COME AND SEE ME; I AM SICK."

"Poor Bertie!" said Milly; "I'll

go and see him, and take Pearl with me." So Milly's mamma gave her a little basket, with some fruit in it, for Bertie; and then, just before she started, she went out to the barn, and said, gently, "Pearl, Pearl, come here." There was a rustling of white wings, and then Pearl flew down and perched on Milly's shoulder. Then Milly took her in her arms and covered her over with her little white apron, and walked out of the gate towards Bertie's house, which was not very far distant.

Pearl kept perfectly quiet, for two reasons, — because she felt quite safe with Milly, and because, if you hide their eyes, doves will keep quiet, and you can carry them so for a good while.

Bertie was sitting up in bed with his playthings around him when Milly came in. As soon as he saw Milly he smiled and clapped his hands; for he liked her dearly.

"Guess what I have brought you, Bertie!"

"Oh, cherries; I see their red cheeks in the basket."

"Yes; but what I mean is much better than cherries."

"Is it under your apron?"

"Yes."

Then Bertie guessed everything you could mention; but Milly shook her head, and then took off the apron; and there was Pearl looking at Bertie with all her might out of one of her bright yellow eyes.

"Oh, but she'll fly back again, Milly! Doves wont live by themselves, you see."

"I know it; but I have given Pearl to you because you are sick; and you are to keep her always. But then, she must stay with my doves, for it would break her heart to be all alone; she is too fond of society for that."

So Bertie was very well contented; and when Milly was going home with Pearl under her apron, he kissed her, and said, thoughtfully, "I like you, Milly, just as well as if you were a boy;" which remark Bertie meant for very high praise indeed.

Soon, Bertie was well again; and when his birthday came, he invited Milly and Julia to come and see him; but this time he did not send the invitation folded up in the shape of a boat, but on gilt-edged note-paper; for he was going to have a party, and have tea in the summer-house; and the children knew they would all have a pleasant time, for Bertie's mamma loved little children, and tried to make them happy.

"I am going to take Queen Rose

with me," said Julia, "for she has not been to a party since she came from Paris." So she dressed her doll in her finest clothes, and then the two sisters set off together, Julia holding Queen Rose's parasol carefully above her face, so that "the sun might not injure her complexion," as she said.

"See, Milly," said Julia, "I am a great deal better off than you; for I can take Queen Rose about with me, and everybody will admire her; and you have to leave your doves at home."

"Oh, but they love me, and I love them; and so I can carry them about in my heart wherever I go."

It was only a child's saying, but it's true for all that; for anything we love truly we may take with us in our thoughts, wherever we go; and it really belongs to us far more than gold or diamonds or houses or lands. So I think those people are richest who love the most. The Lord Jesus Christ thought so, as you will see if you

will open your little Bible and read the seventh chapter of St. Luke, beginning at the thirty-sixth verse.

So the children came to Bertie's house and found other children

there; and they played together in the beautiful garden, and were very happy.

Julia was not disappointed, for everybody admired Queen Rose. But, by and by, Julia was tired of carrying her doll, so she placed her upon one of the rustic seats that were in the garden, and began to play. Julia, in her haste, forgot to notice that she was leaving Queen Rose where the hot July sun would beat down upon her wax face of red and white, until she began to

do what grown-up people sometimes threaten to do, — "melt with the heat."

But little Julia, forgetting poor Queen Rose, played on with the others, until Bertie, taking Milly by the hand, said, "Come into the summer-house." So they all followed, and there was a feast spread for the children, with a birthday cake in the midst, frosted over, and set about with roses.

Presently, Julia heard patter, patter, patter, on the roof, and cried

out, "Dear me, it rains! and Queen Rose will be all wet."

So she ran with all her might, but it was too late. When she came to the rustic seat where she had left her doll, Queen Rose was, indeed, in a doleful plight. The hot sun had melted her nose, in the first place, and then the rain had washed away her pretty red cheeks, and drenched her fine attire.

Julia was loud in her lamentations. "Oh, my beautiful Queen Rose is all spoiled! nobody will admire or look at her any more."

The rest tried to console her, but no one could do anything with her but Milly, into whose wise little head had darted a famous plan. Smoothing Julia's hair, she said, "Don't cry, dear little sister! If you will be good and patient, I am very sure Queen Rose will come back to you as pretty as ever."

Then Milly brought the doll where Bertie's kind, good mamma was, and put her arms around the lady's neck, and whispered to her a long time; for Milly knew how

good she was, and that she would do almost anything to please a little child.

Then Milly came back to Julia, and told her, "Queen Rose is coming back to you a week from to-day."

And Julia, who believed all that Milly told her, took her hand, and began to smile once more, though she couldn't tell how it was all going to happen.

Sure enough, a week from that day, Queen Rose came back to

her little mistress, almost as pretty as ever. For Bertie's mamma, who understood all about such things, had painted her cheeks, and made her another nose of wax, and then Milly dressed her, and brought her to Julia, who said, "O Queen Rose, I'll be careful never to leave you in the sun or rain again."

But Milly thought to herself, "My doves are the best; the sun cannot melt them, the rain cannot wet them. I can love them, and they can love me." Then the lit-

tle girl went out to feed them, and they flew down to her, and brushed her with their shining wings, cooing softly, and nestling against her bosom. And loving so, and being loved, Milly's heart was over-brimming with a most sweet and gentle content. Then Milly's father, finding her thus, laid his hand upon her head, saying, "God bless thee, my little daughter!" and repeated very slowly those lovely verses that were made by a great poet:—

"'He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast;
He prayeth best who loveth best
All things, both great and small;
For the great God, who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.'

"Will you try, not only to pray 'well,' but to pray 'best,' dear little daughter?"

And Milly, looking up into her father's face with a bright, dear smile, answered, "I will try every day so long as I live to pray 'best.'"

Jeannette's Self-Denial.

IN Germany they tell a story about a little girl named Jeannette, who once went out to see a grand review. She found a capital place from

which to see the soldiers pass, and was looking to see them march, when she noticed a poor old woman in the crowd behind her trying very hard to get where she could see the soldiers. Jeannette pitied her, and said to herself, —

"I should like to see the soldiers march, but it isn't kind in me to stay in this nice seat and let that old woman stay where she can't see anything. I ought to honor old age, and I will."

So Jeannette called the old wo-

man, and placing her in the nice seat, fell back among the crowd. There she had to tiptoe and peep and dodge about to catch a glimpse of the splendid scene which she might have seen fully and easily if she had kept her place. Some of the people said she was a silly girl, and laughed at her. Was she sorry for giving it up? No. She was glad, because she knew she had given pleasure to a poor old woman. Thus Jeannette was rewarded in her heart for her kindness to old age.

A few minutes later a man covered with lace elbowed his way through the crowd, and said to her, "Little girl, will you come to her ladyship?"

Now Jeannette could not imagine who her ladyship was, but she followed the man to a scaffold within the crowd. A lady met her at the top of the stairs, and said, —

"My dear child, I saw you yield your seat to the old woman. You acted nobly. Now, sit down here by me. You can see everything here."

Thus Jeannette was rewarded a second time for honoring old age by denying herself. You are glad; are you not? You admire her conduct; don't you? If you do not, I think you need to take a lesson not only from Jeannette, but also from the pure and blessed Jesus. He denied himself enough to quit his heavenly throne and come to earth and suffer a cruel death, that all who will believe on Him may go to heaven when they die.

See him hanging there on the cross, between the two thieves, while that great crowd of wicked men are standing round and mocking him.

Surely, you ought for his sake to deny yourself little pleasures when, by doing so, you can add to the enjoyment of the poor, the feeble, the sick, or the aged. If you will, your heart will grow glad under the smile of Jesus; and if no rich lady or gentleman reward you here, yet, in the great fatherland above, Jesus will say to you, —

"'I saw you give up your own pleasure to make another happy. I was pleased with you. Sit down on my throne."

"In a Minute."

WHAT do you think Johnny's birthday present was? A wheelbarrow. He was six years old. And how rich he felt! "Now I can wheel mother's dinner home

from market," he said, "and I can help father, and do ever so many things." That is right. It is so pleasant to do little services for others, especially for our parents.

For two days he often asked, "Mother, what can I wheel for you?" But she had nothing to be wheeled, and so she said, "Thank you, Johnny; by and by I shall have something for you to do." Johnny wished it was now, and not by and by.

About four days after, Johnny

and his barrow and some boys were down by the frog-pond at play. And what do you think they were wheeling? Four mud-turtles, which one of the boys found in the swamp. I do not know how much pleasure it gave the turtles, for they could not laugh and talk about it, but the boys had good fun.

In a little while Johnny's mother called him. He heard her call the first time and the second, but he was too busy to mind it. His sister then came to find him.

"Johnny, mother wants you to go down street and bring home some salt fish."

"Don't want to," answered he.

"Yes, but mother wants you to," said his sister.

"I'm taking my turtles to ride, and I can't," cried Johnny; "I don't want to."

"Come," cried his sister.

"In a minute," screamed Johnny.

How long do you suppose that minute was? It was nearly half an hour, and might have been a great

deal longer, only that he pitched into the mud; over went Johnny, wheelbarrow, and all.

"Oh, dear, dear!" he cried, picking himself up, and looking at his dirty clothes. *Now* he thought of mother. He could run to her fast enough, now that he had need of her help, but he could not go when she needed his. Oh, the selfish little boy! His conscience smote him. He was loath to show himself; but go home he must, for who would take care of such a pitiful-looking child but mother?

Home he trudged, leaving the boys to fetch his barrow. It was a sober walk.

"Oh, dear!" he said, coming into the kitchen; indeed, he was almost ready to cry, partly for the mud, but most for fear of what his mother would say. She heard him, and turned round.

"You dirty boy, go away!" cried his aunt.,

"Come here, my child," said his mother.

Ah, that is mother; she is al-

ways ready to receive her child, however sad his plight. The mother took her boy, washed him, undressed him, and dressed him again in clean, sweet clothes. She did not talk much, but she was very kind, and very sad too. Ah, she did not begrudge serving him. Johnny felt her kindness, and more and more he felt his own disobedience and disobligingness.

"Mother," at last he said, "I am going to kill my turtles."

"Why?" asked she.

"Because," cried Johnny, "be-

cause they wouldn't let me go down street for you."

"Did the poor little turtles beg you not to mind mother?" she asked.

"Not in so many words," answered Johnny, slowly; "but they seemed to say, Stay, stay a minute."

"And do you think it was the poor little turtles that said that?" asked his mother, seriously.

Johnny hung down his head, as well he might, trying to throw the blame of his disobedience on the

turtles, and not where it properly belonged, — on his own naughty will. Adam and Eve did just so when they did not mind God in the Garden of Eden. Eve said it was the serpent who made her do wrong. Adam said it was Eve that made him do wrong. You see wrong-doing is always cowardly, trying to make excuses, and throwing the blame upon somebody else. Is it not mean?

"Do you *really* think," asked Johnny's mother again, "that the poor little turtles are to blame for

your not coming when mother called you? Do *they* deserve to be punished?"

"No," cried Johnny, finding it hard to stand his mother's look,— "no; it was I, only I, naughty I. It was I that said, Stay, stay; and, mother, God punished me; he pitched me into the mud; and you made me feel bad, you were so kind;" and tears streamed down Johnny's cheeks. "Do let me go down street now for you, mother, — do."

But his mother no longer needed the little service which he had begrudged her. The fish had come up.

"Send me on some other errand," pleaded Johnny. But she had now nothing for him to do. And all that day, and for many days after, a sorrowful shadow rested upon the child's heart, for that lost opportunity of serving his dear, dear mother.

Don't you think he minded her very quickly next time?

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